



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0508MI-1 for Education Achievement Authority of Michigan

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The EAA has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas. The first core reform area is standards for college and careers. The standards, according to the EAA vision, crosses over to a next-generation learning incorporating state, national and international standards aligned to curricula, mapped reporting records, and monitored at multiple levels to assess student, staff, and school performance.</p> <p>The second core reform area, building data systems, is conveyed with the example of a student named Jared, who works with project teams, builds multi-media assignments as evidence of academic progress, and tutors colleagues, text-messages facilitating teachers, and completes a math music blog all before he reaches the gates of school in a typical day of blended learning.</p> <p>The third core reform area, to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective educators, is captured by quality 21st century technology based system to deliver and deploy teacher's on-going, real-time professional development, classroom support, micro-lesson analysis / classroom videos, electronic portfolios, and on-demand libraries from master mentors. Hard to staff, persistently low achieving schools are central focus to EAA with 100% of the participating schools selected by low performance statewide starting in the heart of Detroit. Teachers are grouped on-going to address strengths and needs observed in practice and led by principal leaders who are trained in assessing performance based student outcomes. Teacher incentives, as they are identified as highly qualified, will be used to mentor and develop talent with 30% of the new teachers in 14 schools recruited through Teach for America to support transformative era of reform. EAA's vision for hard to fill math, special education, and bilingual positions were not specifically identified nor addressed here, only that teachers will meet the diverse needs of ALL students.</p> <p>The fourth core reform area, to turn around lowest achieving schools, is best summarized by the vision of equity. Overall the vision articulates a compelling approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement, deepening student learning, and increasing equity (by serving 100% high needs students) through personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests. A score at the high level higher range is allotted for not addressing the hard to staff specialty content areas.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The EAA approach to implementing its reform proposal is based on a complex system of qualitative and quantitative data on the lowest performing schools in the State to select 15 initial schools with 417 educators, 10,380 high need students, and 86% are from low-income homes. There is a list of the schools participating and total participating educators and students as required by this section</p> <p>EAA's approach will support high-quality school-level implementation because all students are high needs and because the model relies on exiting schools annually whereby schools continue with EAA, restart as a charter, or returning to their initial school setting. These choices are offered a school when it is out of the lowest performing status. Full points were allotted this section.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>EAA is creating an extremely innovative model that reinvents the concept of schools based on the latest research. It is posed to be a national model recognized for innovation with a compelling narrative addressing the future success for students and</p>		

their families in the most vulnerable impoverished communities.

EAA includes a high-quality plan organized by the required components to identify program goals and objectives. The EAA reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools, and enable achievement in all outcomes and goals. Its plan, the logic flow-chart, and a compelling theory of learning present clear prospects to improve student learning through the projected outcomes for all students, their families, and the communities.

Full points were allotted this section.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The EAA vision of reform and its plan for implementation are likely to result in improved student learning, performance, and increased equity as demonstrated by ambitious yet achievable annual goals (for most but not all measures) that are equal to or exceed State ESEA targets overall and by student subgroup for each participating LEA.</p> <p>EAA equates the individual student progress for all students and subgroups as one year of academic improvement plus a decile more to represent annual growth. The standard of progress is ambitious and achievable because it is meaningful to the project's implementation and to assessing annual progress. It includes both status and growth. This measure will exceed the state ESEA targets because there are no gaps between the whole group and the sub-groups as described in the gap section.</p> <p>EAA will decrease the achievement gap and proposed to exceed the State ESEA target based on the fact that there is no gap between EAA and the State in math and ELA scores by sub-group categories and therefore EAA used the "all students" category for decreases in the achievement gap with the exception of breaking-out the special education group. The EAA target is to increase through an index of annual growth plus one decile each year using scale scores. This approach appears to exceed the State level ESEA targets.</p> <p>Unlike other sub-groups, there is a gap for EAA special education scores compared to the State. However, EAA targeted a 5% increase each year for this subgroup. This approach should exceed the ESEA target because 20% growth over the grant program is intuitively substantial growth.</p> <p>EAA set a 3% increase in the graduation rates each year for each school with baseline data from 2011-12 provided. It was not clear if this rate is equivalent to or exceeds state ESEA targets.</p> <p>EAA set projections for college enrollment to increase by 5% each year with baseline data from 2011-12 provided. There was no subgroup data presented and it was not discussed.</p> <p>This section was scored at the high level mid range for not addressing the ESEA State targets as required for all measures.</p>		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	7
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>EAA has been in operation since September 2012 and described the EAA administrative team's record of success in the past four years in Kansas City, Missouri Public Schools in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. This criteria, however, requires four years of advancing student learning for each school. This was not possible in EAA's situation. However, the context for advancing student learning and achievement, and particularly, for addressing equity, were used to address this section.</p> <p>EAA provided a clear description of stellar success based on the record of five exemplary leaders in education. EAA has been invited by the Governor of Michigan to address turn-around schools. The team is recognized nationally and the evidence is unequivocally clear that the transformative model has and will offer an ambitious and achievable level of academic improvement and educational change for poor urban students and their families in the EAA schools. The figures and narrative description present clear evidence that demonstrates the applicant's ability to—</p> <p>Improve student learning outcomes that address closing the achievement gaps by virtue that the population is 100% students at risk. The transformational model will have a significant and lasting impact by raising student achievement, increase the high school graduation rate, and increase college enrollment rates as demonstrated by more than four years of a successful track-</p>		

record in similar school settings.

The track record of the administrative team showed clear evidence that EAA will achieve ambitious and significant reform in its lowest-performing schools. The applicant provided charts and data reporting four years of experience in improving student improvement through ambitious and significant reforms

EAA presented a compelling narrative that provides clear approaches and success in the last four years to make student performance data available in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. Data will be made available to parents, students and educators through standards based report cards and offer a practical way to monitor individual students with oversight by administration. This section was scored at the middle level for not addressing, in any way, a track record of success in the participating schools but at the middle range for addressing its approaches across each criterion of this section.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

EAA demonstrated clear evidence that it employs a high level of transparency in processes, practices, and investments, including how it will make public, by school & by school-level expenditures, for regular K-12 instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. It will provide a website where expenditures and salaries by school levels are posted.

Currently EAA makes available the following four categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds:

- Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff, based on public disclosure requirements under State and federal law which appears in line with the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local government finances
- Actual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional staff only;
- Actual personnel salaries at the school level for teachers only; and
- Actual non-personnel expenditures at the school level

This section was scored at the high level, high range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

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(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

EAA demonstrated clear and strong evidence that it enjoys successful conditions and sufficient autonomy. This includes State authority to establish EAA. It also includes legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements between the Regents and the Detroit Public Schools outlining powers for EAA. For example, seat-time waivers, extended school days for students, an 8-hour contract teacher day, and an extended school calendar to assist in implementing the personalized learning environments as described. This section was allotted full points.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which each LEA has demonstrated evidence of—

EAA described and documented meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal. The description referred to compelling anecdotal evidence of a retreat, student participation 100-fold across the state for input on the technology systems, and parent meetings which developed the five pillars of the program. The description included dates, processes, and success in input and feedback on the final proposal. The input and feedback was multifaceted in informal and formal surveys and grouping configurations. Teachers participated in the training as part of understanding what the commitment to EAA meant. Principals and the community were described to provide meaningful support for the proposal. It appeared that the input was structured at a grassroots level addressing all parts of the requirements in this section.

EAA is without collective bargaining representation and provided letters as evidence that all but two teachers supported the EAA's RTT-D proposal.

EAA provided letters of support from such key stakeholders as parents and parent organizations, student organizations, early learning programs, tribes, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, local civic and community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education. This section was allotted full points.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>EAA demonstrated evidence that it has already in place the needs and gaps from a careful analysis of the current status of the schools. This is based on three years of work with parents, staff, students and stakeholders to examine needs and gaps and propose solutions. EAA documented its resources with example surveys and their analysis and professional development feedback. In addition, this is based on the last year in planning the RTT-D proposal in which EAA and the constituency that support it in the community and in the schools found egregious gaps and holes in achievement for the lowest performing schools in Michigan. The logic behind the analysis is demonstrated by compelling research-based approaches, quasi-experimental studies of transformative school programs, and descriptions of how best to serve the population that EAA knows so well.</p> <p>This section was allotted full points for making a solid case to justify how the EAA is poised to be a catalyst of change for the nation based on a reputable national profile of success.</p>		

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>EAA presented an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners but appears to overlook the needs of English learners without an informed research-based support for students and their families who bring a non-English language to schools. However, the strengths of the approach clearly addressed the needs of high-need students in an age-appropriate manner. The approaches for high-needs students is substantial with a high-quality plan containing the details and components required to prepare high needs students for college and careers.</p> <p>EAA will support parent communications through standard-based reports that are accessible daily. Educators will support students on a path leading to college/career readiness tracking and guiding each student's progress. All students will understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals through Individual Learning Plans and student centered systems of learning.</p> <p>EAA identified learning goals linked to college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. EAA will utilize unit maps for teachers, parents and students in a syncopated system to structure the student's learning, measure progress, and achieve goals. These unit maps and Individual Learning Plans provide real-time feedback. As a student completes a task, there is a system of feedback managed by an informed teacher guide. The teacher knows how to navigate blended learning, engage student's interests and personal strengths toward college and career readiness. In this way, the student and the teacher engage in deep-learning experiences focused on academic interests.</p> <p>EAA will provide world languages where every student is involved in language study but the plan did not clearly show how this curriculum connects to the overarching pillars of the program. EAA described how it plans to use iEARN with international project-based learning initiatives but it did not address the how it will include the resources of non-English languages that students bring from their home. It stated there will be multilingual technology but it did not clearly address families that are poor and immigrant facing double hurdles in language and access to core curriculum.</p> <p>It was not clear that EAA students will all have access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, for providing attention to ELLs. EAA did not describe how it will build on student's who bring a non-English language to school, and build on that language for access to academic English and strengthen the access to education in a home language other than English. Most of all this is important because when EAA speaks of learning outcomes that are based on readiness to move across the curriculum on an individual basis, the needs of children who speak a language other than English and differentiated levels or readiness were not addressed.</p> <p>EAA students will master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving. The curriculum will build upon world-class standards personalized, inclusive of special needs, provide consistent self-assessment approaches. The curriculum will be assessed using rigorous competency-based portfolios and alternative assessment to address higher thinking skills.</p> <p>Students in the EAA program will develop individual learning goals that ensure he or she can graduate on time, college- and career-ready. The program includes high-quality digital content that is aligned with Common Core Standards and world class graduation requirements. This is described in the high quality plan with a score-card of growth metrics for student performance including job-embedded electives.</p>		

EAA described how it will develop ongoing and regular feedback with consistent focus on analytics to inform teachers and administrators. Participation analytics track individual student data. EAA will provide personalized learning recommendations based on the analytics, student portfolios, and trimester goals and standards-based reporting systems. The diagnostics help to seamlessly link teacher recommendations using a library of resources, data on student's current knowledge and skills, and college- and career-ready standards.

EAA described how it will accommodate high-quality strategies for high-need students without making specific recommendations to accommodate homeless, foster care, or incarcerated, or English learners as defined in this notice. EAA refers to poor and urban students in a broad sense and plans to accommodate them with technology access, individualized learning environments, wrap around social services that will address needs of at-risk students in a program defined by college- and career-ready standards and career-ready graduation requirements.

EAA described, in a limited way, mechanisms for training and support of the Buzz system for students. The students will be trained at the same time the teachers are trained, spring and summer each year of the project. The narrative described in detail the four week summer PD for teachers. In addition, the plan stated that each September the students will show mastery through Learning, Practice, Application and Testing; however, it was not clear the preliminary mastery of using the technology was fully described to be in place.

This section was scored at the high level in the middle range for not clarifying how students are trained to use the technology and for not including specific sub-groups of high-needs students, particularly to address language needs for ELLs.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There is a high quality plan that shows how EAA will provide all participating educators with training and professional development that supports their individual and collective capacity to implement a personalized learning environment. EAA will provide four-week professional development, expert lesson plans, professional development using classroom coaches, and a resource of online professional development seminars, individually accessed. The teachers will collaborate on-line though technology and with principal teams, as planned systematically across each school year.

The buy-in for teachers would be linked to pay incentives and mentoring roles. There is wiki personnel to help teachers develop and upload lesson plans. There are curriculum curators to assist in the large task of a dashboard of lesson plans, teacher designed, to be made available across 14 schools.

EAA provide abundant evidence that it will provide the strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time, college- and career-ready; through the PD, coaching, and on-line resources. In addition, EAA presented a clear plan to adapt content and instruction, providing opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks, in response to their academic needs, academic interests, and optimal learning approaches in blended learning. There is a clear system of management of the technology platform and the professional development planned each year to support the use of the technology. EAA provided a clear focus on how teachers will learn to engage students through, discussion and collaborative work, project-based learning, videos, audio, and manipulatives.

EAA provided a high-quality plan about how it will support educators to frequently measure student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. EAA described how it will use data to inform the acceleration of student progress using the reporting system, a standards map, and specifics about a grading system with performance-based levels of success.

EAA described how it will provide evaluation systems that will provide incentives based on teacher effectiveness including superintendents, principals and non-teaching educators. EAA described the linkages to professional development and how educators will have individualized asynchronous learning opportunities. Although learning through videos is at ground-level, the contexts for working with principals and forming smaller, working-communities with shared goals and visions were also clearly developed in the plan. For instance, principals will conduct classroom observations to examine fidelity of implementation. This occurs weekly in January 2013 and continues. There are focus groups October, March and annually beginning March 2013. This described effective use of formative data for developing a professional leaning plan. It appears there is a professional learning community focused on skills and needs and trained leadership roles. This provides a humanizing system of improvement of the individual and collective practice of educators. This helps to vitalize the other more passive learning and grading systems of a computer PD program.

It is clear that EAA will improve teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness through an evaluation system featuring frequent feedback, recommendations, supports, and interventions. Principals evaluate teachers and recommend video series, for example. It appears that EAA described human linkages to support teachers through the classroom coaches assigned by building; *but there was little mention about the content areas needs such as math, ELA, special needs and ELL coaches.*

EAA provided a high quality plan that described how all participating educators will know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements. EAA provided actionable information that helps educators identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests. EAA will provide professional development in building higher thinking skills. It will use technology for individual, group, and classroom approaches. EAA will provide high-quality learning at the digital level aligned with college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. It described how it will map standards and report student performance toward mastery learning with alternative methods of assessments including student work portfolios. *However, EAA did not address the State's statement about how out-of-grade performance assessments could be seen as evading the state testing system.*

EAA provided examples of on-line experiences where educators are provided the tools to create and share new resources in designing lesson plans. EAA described how it will provide incentives for highly effective educators to tutor and support novice educators.

EAA provided processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches through a platform of analytics and data-tags. This will rank programs and lesson-materials by student usage. The system will be in place to provide continuous feedback about the effectiveness of the resources in meeting student needs through scoring rubrics providing feedback to leadership, educators, and parents.

EAA described that all participating school leaders and school leadership teams have training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment that meets individual student academic needs and accelerates student progress through common and individual tasks toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements.

EAA described a comprehensive program for evaluating all educators where school leaders and school leadership teams assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate for the purpose of continuous school improvement. EAA described how it will provide training, systems, and practices to continuously improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps through pay systems that motivate performance and inform decisions for tenure, and promotion.

EAA presented a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals. All schools appear to be those described as hard-to-staff schools and there is a plan to address increasing hard-to-staff subject areas through administration roles and remote teachers, but it did not clearly address a clear program to develop, attract or retain hard to fill content areas. This section was scored at the high level for addressing the teaching practices so boldly and fully. This section was scored at the middle range for not addressing specialty content areas when hard to fill teacher vacancies arise.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning environments by organizing the EAA central office from the Board level to the school level as provided in the organizational chart. The chart demonstrated how the personalized learning environments will be facilitated through a governance structure providing organized structure of support and services to all participating schools.

In addition, the Michigan legislature approved EAA to address the lowest achieving schools with the endorsement of the Governor. The school leadership teams in participating schools will have sufficient flexibility and autonomy over schools factors (school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and non-educators, and school-level budgets) based on the authority of Board Policies. These policies give School Reinvention Teams the leverage they need to flexibly implement the school factors named above.

EAA described and cited policies as defined in the Standard Operating Procedures of the Board, and also cited in state regulations and the Department of Education waivers giving EAA the authority to design systems for students to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, and to demonstrate mastery of standards at multiple times, and in multiple comparable ways.

EAA did not provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students. There was insubstantial programatic support for special needs for instance, reverse inclusion model, and the specialized

supports were named at one site. EAA identified special education resources and interpreters; it stated that it would provide resources for English learners in two languages without reference to providing staff who are bilingual.

This section was scored at the high level for addressing special needs but at the lower range for addressing English learners materials without addressing bilingual personnel to provide access to parents and students who are non-English speakers; and for not fully describing a program of support and access for special needs students

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The participating schools in the RTT-D proposal represent 100% high need students. Therefore, EAA has ensured that all participating students, parents, educators and other stakeholders regardless of income have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the proposed program.

EAA described its plan to ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support. It specifically described how it will provide a range of strategies including: peer support, online support, or local IT phone line support. In addition, it plans to provide all students and educators a personal computer to increase access to technology for low income students and the community of schools.

EAA described how it will use information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems including software that securely stores personal records.

EAA described how it will ensure schools use interoperable data systems that include human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data.

This section was scored at the high level, high range.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
EAA described a high quality plan for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process. EAA addressed how statistical analyses will be employed for a robust and full evaluation of the components of the program, from professional development to student progress indicators. It described a mixed method approach and also identified a treatment and comparison group approach.		
EAA will provide meetings between project directors, coordinators, principals, Chief Officers to provide opportunities for feedback. However, EAA <i>did not</i> provide a flow chart to show how the committees communicated and how often the meetings were scheduled each year. In addition, EAA named an external researcher in the activity section of the plan but <i>did not</i> include them as a person responsible. If an external researcher is used, then the same should be responsible for deliverables.		
EAA provided the personnel for feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant in its high quality plan. EAA also described how it will monitor, measure, and publicly share information on the quality of its investments. This will be carried out through the web-site, wikis, managed by School Reinvestment Teams and the Administrative Leadership Teams.		
Full points were allotted for a high quality plan at the higher range for not providing a calendar to sequence the meetings for feedback and the structure for communications in the evaluation plan.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
EAA provided a plan on the strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders named were teachers, administration and staff; and the external stake holders named were students, parents, community, and national evaluators hired by the Department of Education. There would appear to be communication with businesses, community organizations and agencies that will be part of the wrap around services identified in the vision in section A1. In addition, throughout the proposal, EAA refers to communications with parents through monthly open house		

meetings. This section was scored high at the high range.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

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(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

EAA provided ambitious yet achievable performance measures, overall and by subgroup, with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures. For each applicant-proposed measure, the applicant provided a clear and compelling rationale. For example, early reading inventory at the primary grades will help to develop and address measures of self-esteem and efficacy at an early age. In addition, EAA provided important progress measures in college readiness and demonstrated a very cohesive program of measures with assessment in technology use and also in multicultural understandings for 9-12 students providing a well-rounded menu, coherently related to the larger goals of the program, and demonstrating a vigorous means of assessment with extremely robust qualitative and quantitative measures across K-12 programs. EAA described that the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information. The assessments are tailored to its plan and theory of action in all respects.

EAA addressed that it will review and improve these measure over time if they are insufficient to gauge implementation progress. This is provided by the descriptions across the proposal for systematic feedback links through committees, open houses, and communications that provide consistent and routine feedback on assessment and progress.

A high score at the high range was allotted.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

EAA provided a clear plan that it will evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed program (its funded activities in professional development and the vast systems of technology. The plan to evaluate effectiveness was evident within cost effectiveness studies of the individual components of the program. EAA plans to evaluate how it can improve its productively in order to improve results in a comprehensive approach describing evolution over time in relationships, attitudes, measurement tools and resources. These approaches address how it will improve use of technology, its relationship within the community, its method of compensation reform, etc.

This section was scored high at the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>EAA identified all funds that will support the project including external foundation support, increased Title I or State support through increased enrollment because EAA plans to add schools into the program and nearly double its size in year two. It also identified other Federal funds through grant applications such as TIF. It will present a budget that is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal.</p> <p>It provided a clear and thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities and included total revenue from all sources. It identified the funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs that will be incurred during and after the grant period. It provided a focus on strategies that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments through an extensive network of supporting agencies and organizations within the state focused on the school community.</p> <p>Full points were allotted.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan included support from State through commitments at the legislator level, increase in state funds by adding new schools into the program (15-20 schools a year) to increase student enrollments and Title III resources. There is a plan to build philanthropic funding and number of letters documenting support from local government leaders. In addition, grants such as TIF and others</p>		

will be identified for increased revenue after the life of the grant. The plan addressed long term goals to manage sustainability including budget assumptions, potential sources, and uses of funds. The budget addressed how it would taper the personnel in technology without a clear picture of the capacity of "existing staff".

This section described a base of financial support to meet continuance of the program except with technology staff. This section was allotted full points at the high range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

EAA will integrate public and private resources in a partnership designed to augment the schools' resources through a plan to develop Parent Empowerment Centers. The Centers will build additional student and family supports to schools that address the social, emotional, or behavioral needs of the participating students by deploying resources based on collaborative input from parents. The partnership will engage parents in schools as a civic activity focused on the children's needs. This partnership with parents will provide access to a menu of health care, and child care resources. It will provide parents an opportunity to develop leadership skills and empower them to continue to build other centers to extend the program across the larger community within the EAA organization. This program is designed for the highest priority of students in the participating schools where 100% are high needs.

The EAA proposal provides student and family supports in a coherent and sustainable partnership that it has formed with public or private organizations such as public health agencies available on the week-ends. Financial literacy local employment agencies, training job skills and research in employment. It will assess progress in the numbers of parents attending workshops, in use of the parent resource centers, and documentation of parent meetings and activities.

EAA will improve results over time providing ongoing feedback from established leading centers. EAA described how the partnership would provide each of the participating schools integrated education with other services that address social-emotional, and behavioral needs for participating students through parent resource centers.

EAA developed a strategy to scale the model beyond the participating students to at least other high-need students and communities by providing incentives for parents to charter centers and build on the success from seed centers over time. The partnerships build a cadre of parent leaders providing a clear context for engaging in a expanding notion of home-school relationships.

EAA will integrate services and education providing ambitious yet achievable performance measures in parent leadership, family literacy, and financial literacy and student-parent activities focused on graduation. EAA will improve results over time and provided a plan with assessment and measured results addressing family literacy, financial literacy, school participation and motivation for college and careers.

EAA documented how the partnership and LEA would build the capacity of staff in participating schools by providing feedback from parents and participants to inform program activities and improve the services.

Full points were allotted this section.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The EAA has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas. The first core reform area is standards for college and careers to compete in a global economy. EAA standards cross over to a next-generation learning incorporating state, national and international standards aligned to curricula, mapped reporting records, and monitored at multiple levels to assess student, staff, and school performance.

The second, third, and fourth core reform areas are developed cohesively in a program that addresses meaningful reform for

the students and families in school where reform is most powerful. For example, EAA described how it will build data systems using student growth that informs the evaluation of teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction. EAA also will use the TIF grant to add to the base for supporting professional development of educators, focusing on student growth measures and formative assessment measures to inform practice and improve instruction. EAA will recruit, retain, develop, and reward educators where they are needed most by serving schools identified in the state experiencing chronic low performance.

Total	210	189
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	7

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

1. Budget Supplement One: The rationale is that hard to measure traits of critical thinking and creativity (interest profiles) should be part of a report system accessible to parents and students through mobile applications. Intuitively, a profile of critical thinking, creativity, and interests using computer generated profiles relates to the core reform to build data systems. But, it is not clear why it would be necessary and why parents and students need to assess computer generated profiles. There was not information provided to know exactly what inventories entail and why they are needed. The outcomes and the benefits for students and parents were not clearly conveyed without any reference to benefits to educators.

2. Budget Supplement One: The high quality plan involved researching mastery based systems, mastery based progress reports, applications of (personality inventories) prototypes and OER language. The plan provided a clear description of how it would carry out the activities to develop the system in technology for participating schools. It would provide profile reports to student and parents as "apps." across all schools in the EEA.

3. Budget Supplement One: The significance was questioned as to how this technology application would impact the lives of children and their families and improve careers and college access. A buy-in from your middle and high school students and parents or an expressed interest by the clientele would strengthen that this is a reasonable expense and an important undertaking to make this proposal reasonable in relation to the expense.

This proposal was scored at a middle level for not clearly connecting to teachers, and for not making a stronger case for the pay-offs for a student profile inventory. It was scored at the middle range for addressing technology that will impact practice in schools for the next generation of skills.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

1. Budget Supplement Two: The rationale is compelling. Book interest change from year to year and teachers need to have access to multiple copies on a per-read basis instead of a per-book basis. This is especially relevant during a time where e-books are a popular format.

2. Budget Supplement Two: The system is planned for K-12, with 200 books for each grade level. It provided a high quality plan to describe implementation and be co-developed between publishers (vendors) and the EEA.

3. Budget Supplement Two: E-books for teachers appear useful to extend the curriculum and the budget appears adequate to support the development and implementation. The costs are reasonable for advancing technology and generating a viable source of reading access for teachers and students.

In sum, the technology base clearly proposes to take school curriculum to the next level. The use of e-books to support core content and to extend access materials is compelling as technology advances, electronically and digitally, tapping this e-book market potentially will change the concept of curriculum in schools. However, with some restraint due to not testing the concept in a smaller sample of schools.

It was allotted full points.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0508MI-2 for Education Achievement Authority of Michigan

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Beginning with a vivid snapshot of how the project will operate for an individual student, the application presents an exciting and convincing description of creating personalized learning meant to support student's attainment of academic achievement as well as behaviors necessary for success in college and careers. The project envisions student-centered classrooms where students become active participants assuming responsibility for their learning and participate in planning, setting goals and producing evidence of what they have mastered based on projects and performance tasks. Personalized, on-demand and job embedded professional development in pedagogy and content prepares teachers to shift their role to one of facilitator and prepares teachers to implement the Common Core State Standards. Technology serves a multi-faceted role as a platform providing students and teachers access to a variety of learning resources. Assessments are aligned to core content and college and career readiness standards. The approach reflected in the application is comprehensive of the educational experience and learning modalities and credible in terms of feasibility of implementation. The application includes a chart aligning the five project goals (Goal 1: an innovative, challenging and engaging personalized learning environment; Goal 2: a highly effective teacher in every classroom equipped with knowledge and skills needed to empower and support students; Goal 3: a diverse system of effective schools whose leaders have the freedom to deploy resources to maximize student achievement; Goal 4: an uncompromising accountability for the performance of administrators, teachers, other school personnel, and students, as well as the efficient use of human and financial resources across all aspects of the system; and Goal 5: a universal culture of support and parental involvement, with a safe, clean, and nurturing learning environment for every student) with the five proposed EAA projects (1: connecting capacity, 2: connecting tools, 3: connecting information, 4: connecting data, and 5: connecting the school, home, and community) and the RTT-D's four core educational assurances. Narrative descriptions of the projects confirm coverage of the assurance areas.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the high range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application describes a sophisticated and appropriate school selection process and provides documentation of how this process was implemented. The selection process considered quantitative and qualitative data to develop score cards in order to rank order persistently low performing schools among the 93 schools targeted by the SEA as Priority Schools. The resulting list of 15 participating schools satisfies the competition requirements as does the nature of the student population to be served, being totally composed of high needs students.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the high range.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p>		

The application is particularly strong in its discussion of the issue of scaling up. Scaling up is built into the original design as the district was set up by the SEA precisely for the purpose of including more schools in need of turnaround annually. The application provides convincing descriptions of a research-based scalability process (Coburn 2003) consisting of four interrelated dimensions: depth (consequential change in classroom practice), sustainability (maintaining those changes over substantial periods of time), spread (diffusion of the innovation to large numbers of classrooms and schools) and shift (assuming ownership of the innovation which deepens, sustains, and spreads the impact), and a description of an Administrative Management Team (broadly representative of stakeholders) that will operate throughout the program to ensure the quality of implementation based on the ongoing input from stakeholders and analysis of evaluation data. A figure representing the Logic Model includes the components of a high-quality plan as defined for the competition.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application presents ambitious goals related to closing the achievement gap by using general state performance in the top decile as the comparison; these goals may be overly optimistic. Similarly the annual goals for graduation are ambitious yet achievable with a steady growth set as targets. The presentation related to proficiency status and growth used metrics unique to Michigan; it was difficult to assess the reasonableness of the targets. It did seem that these targets probably did exceed state ESEA targets. For example Black Grade 2 reading performance would move from 2039 (baseline) to 2554 (post grant in 2016-2017); these score changes are explained as moving a student annually to achieve a year's growth and move one decile up in achievement. Such a rate of performance closes the gap substantially within four years compared to top performers in the state. The overall goal for graduation rates moves from 69% (Baseline) to 84% (post grant in 2016-2017). Goals for college enrollment rates are set to nearly double over the course of the project; given the project's attention to individualized learning plans to focus students and their families on what is needed to be prepared upon graduation to enroll in college, these goals are achievable.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Due to the unique circumstance of an LEA that only came into existence this year, the application was unable to demonstrate evidence of success over four years in advancing student learning, improving student outcomes, achieving significant reforms in low-achieving schools, or in making student performance data available in ways contributing to improvement of services. Instead, the application described previous work and accomplishments of the project's key staff, employing the strategies reflected in this application. Successes with reforming low-performing schools, increasing student achievement, and improving teaching, as well as making use of a technology platform to support personalized learning, were documented (e.g., past accomplishments of two key personnel in Kansas City, MO using the model proposed for this project resulting in steady achievement gains over four years).

This criterion was rated in the middle range.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application documented the LEA's policies for transparency in all aspects of operation, including the financial sphere. It reflected a sound understanding of the principle of accountability. Making use of technology to offer a searchable (by anyone at no cost) financial data website (updated monthly and including school-level data related to actual personnel salaries and

non-personnel expenditures) is a strong response to this criterion.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application documents fully that the LEA has been provided sufficient autonomy by the SEA necessary to implement the proposed personalized learning environments. The application provides language from the agreement between the state of Michigan, the regents of Eastern Michigan University, and Detroit Public Schools establishing this LEA.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes an extensive effort, using multiple means, to engage stakeholders in the development of the proposal, including seeking additional feedback on a draft application. Examples include holding twelve statewide strategic planning meetings, a weekend retreat for high school students, and follow-up meetings to discuss a draft of the proposal with, among others, members of business and industry, civic and community leaders, and the clergy. The application convincingly documents nearly universal support from teachers in the participating schools. The application provides appropriate evidence, through letters, of support from a wide range of stakeholders including parent organizations, non-profit organizations, government entities, and institutions of higher education.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Due to the unique circumstance of an LEA that only came into existence this year for the express purpose of establishing a district dedicated to student centered learning as a model for other schools and districts throughout the state, the application was unable to analyze its current status in implementing personalized learning environments. The application did document the poor past academic performance of the schools selected to become part of this LEA, and its logic model of intervention and underlying principles could be understood as a justified and achievable response to needs and gaps inferred from these schools' data profiles. As part of the process for developing the application, the applicant described means for continuing to identify needs and gaps in implementation of the proposed personalized learning system (e.g., SWOT analyses, focus groups, ongoing surveys, and digital parking lots for teachers, students, and parents to provide questions, concerns, and discoveries). The application references the high quality plan in Section C (that includes all elements required for this competition) with regard to ongoing analyses of all facets of operations to identify and address unmet and/or emerging needs.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16
(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

This application describes an approach to student-centered learning that is highly innovative and compelling. Students would have individualized instructional plans based on the principle of mastery learning and managed by a technology platform designed to provide students, teachers, and parents with ongoing information regarding achievement of goals aligned with standards and student aspirations. The application is unclear as to the support that would be provided to either students or parents in the use of the technology platform. Students would have individual choices regarding nature of instruction, types of instructional materials, and pacing of learning. A student's instructional program would provide opportunities for deep learning experiences and would expose him/her to diverse perspectives to further deepen learning. The learning program deepens learning through the use of a construct similar to Bloom's Taxonomy that moves students beyond knowledge acquisition to the use of that knowledge to apply, assess, and reflect. The number of nature of available educational resources provides learners with ample opportunities to explore diverse contexts for the mastery and application of knowledge. The approach described is extremely thorough and on the cutting edge of efforts to provide personalized learning environments. The project's implementation plan is set out in a high-quality plan that addresses all of the components specified for this competition.

The one serious concern relates to implementation for elementary school students because of their age and level of responsibility and awareness required of a student to be a partner in his/her learning. Distinctions among students of different ages is not addressed in the application.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

20

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application provides a detailed and sound description of how teachers will be supported in implementing this project. The emphasis on differentiated and continuous professional development is appropriate and, with the technological capacity, feasible. Forging professional learning communities at school, district, and global levels is possibly unique and certainly bold. Support for the teachers through the use of school coaches as well as central office is appropriate. Support is also provided in a strong manner within the technology platform related to the organization of resources that teachers can access to plan instruction. For example, the project will develop a set of videos of real classroom examples of what a student-centered classroom looks like in day to day practice across different age bands. Appropriate attention is paid to ensuring that school leaders are able to provide training and support to teachers implementing this instructional system. The application includes provision for a six-month principal apprenticeship program to give new leaders an opportunity to work in a student-centered school to gain a strong understanding of this reform model's critical elements (e.g., individual learning plans, learning for mastery), as well as a teacher leader program to provide a pathway for teachers who have three or more years teaching to assume greater leadership in the school. The application also describes convincingly how students may gain exposure to more highly effective teachers through strategies such as remote teaching. The project's implementation plan is set out in a high-quality plan that addresses all of the components specified for this competition.

The criterion was rated in the high range.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

D(1)

The application documents that schools are provided an extensive degree of autonomy and flexibility, including school-based budgeting and direct staff hires by the principal. Evidence is provided of a "seat time waiver" from the state, ensuring that students can progress to mastery at their own pace. The unique nature of this LEA (i.e. it only exists to implement a personalized learning vision for students attending the selected schools) is reflected in a central office designed to provide relevant support and services to all participating schools. The Chancellor of the LEA may approve credit for learning to mastery accomplished, in part, outside of the classroom in multiple ways. The application's assertion of the project's ability to provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners is supported by a discussion of the conduct of data reviews at the classroom level to make decisions relative to continuous improvement for all student populations. The project provides additional personnel as

well as resources to address students' special needs (e.g. modified lessons and interpreters for special education students, dual-language materials for English learners). Meeting individual student needs is at the project's core of implementing highly individualized learning plans for every student. In Section C the high quality plan for the overall project includes information regarding activity, timeline, deliverable, and person responsible related to the specifics of this criterion.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The application described in extensive detail how the project will ensure that all participating students, parents, and educators have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources, both in and out of school. The proposed budget supports this commitment on the part of the project, including the purchase of equipment that may be needed by students and families outside school. The nature of the information technology systems is suitable to ensure the transmittal of data and learning resources to students and their parents. The application also appropriately provides for a HELP desk available to staff, students, and parents to assist with any technology-related issues that may arise. In Section C the high quality plan for the overall project includes information regarding activity, timeline, deliverable, and person responsible related to the specifics of this criterion.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the high range.</p>		

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The application describes a comprehensive strategy for collecting and analyzing timely and regular feedback on all aspects of the project, from the learning system to the performance of students and changes in teaching, as well as periodic feedback from parents. The multiple measures are reasonable and feasible and the application presents a convincing attitude toward the importance of continually monitoring progress toward project goals, including ramifications for making adjustments and for improving scale up efforts in subsequent years. One strategy for collecting and analyzing timely and regular feedback will include the administration of surveys, in-person interviews, and focus groups of students, parents, and teachers regarding their attitudes about the project on an annual basis. Results of this data collection will be reported annually in a Climate and Culture and Perception Report. This and other reports (e.g., Assessment and Dashboard Report) will be publicly shared regarding RTTT-D investments.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the high range.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The application presents a comprehensive approach to conducting ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. Some of the strategies include: social media, the district and school websites, the RTTT-D wiki, regular open houses and strategic conversations in the community to provide updates.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the high range.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

The application satisfies the required number of performance indicators, including distribution across participant grade levels. The choice of performance indicators at the high school level is particularly strong and suitable, focusing on the contents of a college portfolio and technological literacy, both necessary for success in college and career. Whether the ambitious goals in reading and math for students are reasonable is unclear. A sound rationale for the selection of performance indicators is provided. However, a more extensive set of indicators at the elementary school level is warranted. The application is vague regarding a review of the performance measures for their utility over time.

This criterion was rated in the middle range.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The evaluation plan to examine project activities and their contribution to desired outcomes is sound. Annual student performance data will be subjected to a multiple regression analysis to provide an estimate of the effect of the program. In addition, a Professional Development Impact Report, using data from observations and growth assessments, will evaluate the effectiveness of that project component. Being able to access an extensive array of data directly from the management system puts less burden on those who might otherwise serve as respondents. The evaluation of the effectiveness of investments in various curricula will be analyzed by mining data in the personal learning system, comparing the effectiveness of the various materials relative to their cost to the EAA in order to provide an "effectiveness per dollar" measure. However, the discussion of how this comparison will be conducted is undocumented. Finally, examining the data collection plan raised a question regarding the number of participants; the project proposes to serve over 10,000 students but the charts in Section E(3) reflecting number of participants included under the performance indicators appear to include a much smaller number of students.

This criterion was rated in the middle range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The budget information in the application is complete. The explanations for the expenditures are reasonable. Evidence of external funding is supported in appendix information. There is a question of whether the assumptions that (1) the maintenance (and, inevitably adjustments) of the learning system can be assumed under regular operating funds in later years, and (2) the teachers will no longer need the coaching support provided initially are reasonable.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application describes a high quality plan to sustain the project's goals after the term of the grant. The plan addresses financial support from federal and state sources, as well as foundations. While the ability to secure funding to sustain this effort through the award of competitive grants is not assured, the receipt of several federal and foundation grants already is sound evidence of the likelihood that such efforts will be successful in the future. Evidence is provided that thinking about sustaining the project was part of the initial planning effort (evidenced by efforts to build relationships with partners and sources of support), reflecting the soundness underlying plans for continuation. The high quality plan described in the application includes all of the components required under the competition.

This criterion was rated in the high range.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Competitive Preference Priority</p> <p>The application reflects a strong commitment to providing additional student and family supports, evidenced by its affiliation with the Detroit Parent Network (DPN); this organization will be establishing Parent Centers in each school so that parents can provide appropriate support for participating students. While DPN has been in existence for some time and the application does include sound evidence of DPN's ability to attract parents to its activities, the application does not provide evidence of DPN's track record in terms of having an impact on the children of the participating parents. The application does not provide a sufficient discussion of how the DPN activity is integrated with the personalized learning activity or how the partner's effort will build capacity of school staff to address students' needs (social, emotional, behavioral) because of the lack of linkages between the two spheres of activity. The application also lacks a presentation of student-centered results; the indicators (that will be tracked) are related to parents.</p> <p>This criterion was rated in the middle range.</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Absolute Priority</p> <p>The project's theory of action and design offer a strong and convincing vision of how to create a learning environment that is personalized for individual students. Within this environment, a student learns to levels of mastery and efficacy, ultimately achieving proficiency related to college- and career-ready standards. The project also supports increasing the effectiveness of teachers through extensive professional development as teachers adapt to a new role of facilitators of student-directed learning.</p>		

Total	210	189
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	4
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Optional Budget Supplement: Performance-Based Report Cards</p> <p>The application provides a high quality plan for the development of an additional tool associated with the learning system proposed for use in the project that would generate a student progress report drawing together the variety of information (e.g., assessment results, self-reflection, interests and habits of mind) that is available. The rationale for this additional aspect of the project is weak. The proposed budget appears adequate for the purpose. This optional activity appears to be inconsistent with the requirements under the selection criteria: it does not involve additional LEAs, it does not supplement strategies of measurement already included, and does not contribute to increasing diversity across schools.</p>		

This criterion was rated in the middle range.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

15

13

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Optional budget supplement: Building a New Business Model for E-Book Libraries

The application provides a sound rationale for the activity that could have ramifications well beyond the project itself. It addresses the cost of educational resources and current limitations on teaching and learning because of those costs. The activity is well-conceived as a pilot and includes an appropriate evaluation design in terms of collection and analysis of pertinent data. The one drawback involves the timing for the activity (a five-month pilot beginning as early as February 2013) that seems unrealistic, but this can be easily remedied. If successful, the strategy of obtaining access to educational resources on a temporary basis rather than purchasing them could be a model to be widely implemented. As proposed, the pilot only involves the LEA.

This criterion was rated in the high range.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0508MI-3 for Education Achievement Authority of Michigan

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The Education Achievement Authority (EAA) of Michigan illustrates its vision of significant, deep and creative reform from the opening vignette of this application. The vignette portrays a student interfacing with an educational system that is light years away from the traditional daily experience of our nation's high school pupils; the EAA vision is for an experience that fosters the student's use of today's broad range of multi-media resources to craft a personalized rigorous learning curriculum that meets high academic standards, propels the student aggressively toward college- and career-readiness while supporting the student in taking ownership of his/her own learning through a facilitative teacher, use of technology and opportunities to apply learnings to the real world. Connections with the four core educational assurance areas are clear and portend a credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement and deepening student learning of the RTTT-D grant. The EAA's vision therefore meets the requirements of the Absolute Priority 1. The five projects of this application (Connecting Capacity, Connecting Tools, Connecting Information, Connecting Data, and Connecting the School, Home and Community) also meet identified needs of the schools of the LEA, correlated with the assurance areas as summarized below:

1. Standards and Assessment for Students to be College and Career Ready

As indicated in Table A.1 *EAA Project Listing and the Supporting Needs Statement*, the personalized learning environment proposed in the district's plan is aligned to college- and career-readiness standards, with the student-centered delivery of instruction planned for Project 1 and the curriculum models to be developed in Project 3 "aligned with college- and career-readiness standards."

2. Data Systems to Measure Student Growth

The EAA of Michigan application presents plans for a robust data system that the LEA asserts will not only measure student growth but is designed to provide “uncompromising accountability for the performance of administrators, teachers, other school personnel, and students, as well as the efficient use of human and financial resources,” thus looking toward a data system that will monitor and evaluate all aspects of school operations. A major strength of EAA’s evaluative design is its unique, state-of-the-art digital platform program named Buzz, that is purported to have the capability of monitoring and evaluating ongoing student progress, student pacing through the curriculum programs and student self-assessment in real time. Performance tasks, common assessments and state assessments will be used to inform student work and instruction. The applicant says that Buzz will provide teachers and students with “real-time feedback through a real-time radar map, and standards-reporting tools, linked to individualized [student] learning plans.” Student and instructional data will be used to make “system decisions as to content effectiveness, educator effectiveness and resource efficiencies” in an elegant, interactive and open platform of data collection, integration and management.

3. Recruitment, Development, and Retaining of Effective Teachers and Principals

Paraphrasing Goal 2 in the Table A2. *Alignment of Goals, Projects, and RTT-D Core Educational Assurances*, an objective of the EAA reform initiative is to have every student being taught by highly effective teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to support them in high academic achievement and preparedness for college and career success. On-demand, job-embedded professional development will help teachers acquire such competencies to teach in a student-centered environment of acceleration and deepening of student learning.

4. Turning Around Low-Achieving Schools

The EAA has identified 15 persistently low-achieving (PLA) schools in the city of Detroit, selected from among the 5 percent lowest-achieving schools in the state of Michigan. Goal 5 of this district’s plan is to establish schools with a culture of support and parental involvement that have a safe, clean, and nurturing environment. Teachers and school leaders will be given the resources to maximize student achievement and the flexibility and autonomy to make deep change to transform the LEA schools by building on five pillars that undergird and support the goals of this application and the core educational assurance areas. The five pillars are: (1) grouping and instruction of students by readiness, not age; (2) student responsibility for achieving the objectives of personalized learning paths; (3) student mastery of content; (4) student demonstration of mastery of content through performance tasks and common assessments; and (5) continuous feedback to students, parents, teachers, and administrators on progress toward achievement of teaching and learning and school operations re-organization targets.

(A)(2) Applicant’s approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

EAA very thoroughly addressed this required component of the RTTT-D application requirements. The applicant has identified 15 persistently low-achieving (PLA) schools in the city of Detroit, selected from among the 5 percent lowest-achieving schools in the Michigan, identified by the Department of Education School Reform Office from a list of the 93 “Priority Schools” targeted by the state for reform. The EAA then conducted an analysis of the 93 schools using a “score card” it developed to rank these schools in the order of having the most risk factors according to demographic, facility and Adequate Yearly Performance (AYP) indicators. Evidence of this selection process included a list of the 93 Priority Schools, the rubric/score card for choosing the 15 selected schools, and demographics of the participating schools in the appendices of the plan. The demographic indicators included student proficiency on state tests in communication arts and mathematics, attendance, ACT scores, and dropout and graduation rates.

The applicant states that nearly 100% of the 10,000 participating students are high-need by the federal definition used for this RTTT-D grant. The percent of high-need students by school is contained in a table of *School Demographics*. The table also displays the number of participating educators by school and the number and percent of low-income students (a total of 86% for the LEA). Thus, the participating schools together meet the competition’s eligibility requirements.

The applicant is targeting all grades K – 12 of the participating elementary, middle and high schools for the grant. The rationale for targeting all of the grades in the schools was not explained. It may be that because the EAA is “a newly created statewide system of schools developed to dramatically redesign public education for Michigan’s persistently lowest achieving schools” that all grade spans were required to be addressed by state guidelines for establishing the LEA.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The RTTT-D grant requires that an applicant’s plans enumerate key goals and the activities for achieving the district’s reform goals, a reasonable implementation timeline, designated and appropriate deliverables and staff responsibilities for a credible reform plan overall. There are five (5) strategic goals of this application. In Table C.1., *EAA Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies Aligned with RTT-D Projects*, the applicant links the five projects of this grant application with the key goals and cites important elements of each project that address the goals. Table C.2. *High Quality Plan* provides further and very specific details of the alignment of the goals, pinpointed to objectives and activities, timelines by month and year, deliverables, and identification of persons responsible for activities of the plan.

The theory of change that drove design of the plan is a Logic Model that begins with the problems or issues, identifies strategies and inputs and the desired results of the proposed initiative while also laying out underlying assumptions that will influence the success or non-success of the plan to improve student learning outcomes. The EAA theory of change is displayed in a graphic organizer that also represents the feedback mechanisms of the applicant’s design and the symbiotic relationship of all components of the Logic Model and describes how the reform proposal will be translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change for the participating schools and 15 other schools that are also part of the EAA, but not participating schools of this program. The applicant’s impressive use of Coburn’s (2003) research-based scalability dimensions is a framework for continuous improvement of the initiative. An Administrative Management Team (AMT) composed of teachers, principals, students, and parents as well as central office and project personnel is tasked with evaluation of data about the quality of the implementation.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

As already indicated, throughout this application the LEA comprehensively describes a detailed vision for reform for improved student outcomes. In Table C.1., *EAA Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies Aligned with RTT-D Projects*, the applicant links the five projects of this grant application with the key goals and cites important elements of each project that address the goals. Table C.2. *High Quality Plan* provides further and very specific details of the alignment of the goals with pinpoint objectives and activities, timelines by month and year, deliverables, and identification of persons responsible for all activities of the plan.

In several other displays, the applicant shares achievable and ambitious targets for improved student learning and equity. For example, the applicant explains the Global Scholars student learning growth model that will be used to measure summative results in reading and mathematics for grades 2 – 9 for reading and grades 2 – 10 for mathematics. The learning targets seek one or more years of growth for one year of instruction, moving progressively up by a minimum one decile each year of the grant period for the subgroups as well as all students. Projections are for the entire grant and post-grant periods. Whether the projections for student achievement exceed state targets is not evident since any state targets for the schools of this LEA are not included in the plan. The applicant states that there “is no significant gap among subgroups with the exception of Special Education students,” and therefore the achievement gap that will be addressed and monitored by this LEA is the achievement gap between EAA students and those students performing in the top decile (90 – 100%); a very laudable goal. An example is that for each grade 2 – 9, closing decile targets in reading have been established. The target for Grade 7 students is to close the decile 20 – 100 gap which would represent a major decrease in the achievement gap from a scale score of 649 to 49 for these students.

Graduation rates, another performance measure for this applicant, are projected to rise by 3% each year for the participating

high schools from as low as 63% to 75% by SY 2015 – 2016 at about 3% per year and as high as from 76% to 88% in four years; no state targets were provided for comparison of reasonableness.. College enrollment is projected to rise 5% per year overall and no subgroup data was presented,.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The EAA is a new LEA created through state legislative support August 2011 and, therefore, does not have a track record of even a full school year to point to for a record of success. Thus, the district primarily points to the experience of its administrative team, their individual resumes and the track record of the senior leadership team in implementing and scaling up student-centered public school systems elsewhere in the nation as germane to increased possibilities of this same team having comparable success in eastern Michigan. Yet, the graph of MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) results presented to support this contention seems to show that proficiency rates in communication arts and math were already improving prior to the team's introduction of student-centered learning in their former district in another state. In its review of the EAA application, the Missouri Department of Education (MDE) likewise questioned whether there was a connection between the senior team's actions and MAP results or the result of other factors and forces. In its response to the state, the EAA held to its position and did not provide any other reasons for the increase in MAP scores.

The LEA also pointed out that recognition by the Gates Foundation "as a breakthrough model for its Next Generation Learning Challenge," is indicative of the promise of the EAA model. Whether the selection is indicative of a record of success is difficult to determine since the criteria of the Gates Foundation was not provided. The school district has also been selected for a 2012 grant through the USDOE Teacher Incentive Fund.

The EAA also points out that its innovative Buzz digital platform has been well-designed, adapted and piloted over the past two years as further evidence of a record of success, but the platform was just implemented in September 2012 and therefore has not been tested as to the whether the claims made for its utility and robustness will become reality; it is too early for definitive results.

On the other hand, since one out of the five key projects of the applicant's proposal focuses on establishing wrap-around service models in all of the participating schools, the district's experience of having four such programs in EAA schools may prove helpful in the present effort. This application contains a request for funding of planning grants to support startup of wellness/wraparound clinics and a Collegians program in the remaining 11 schools.

The applicant also touted the ten months of planning of the strategic development process that created the EAA, pointing out milestone that have been met in the establishment of EAA as a district. For example, the EAA was able to get a seat-time waiver from the state of Michigan; so their mastery learning model can be implemented for this grant program. They believe that mastery of skills is more important to student learning than the time a student sits in a classroom. The approval for waiver of seat time (found in the appendix) was for only one year and with conditions. The applicant will have to apply for the waiver each year and show that success has been achieved using a required MED quarterly report for continued approval. The district's Board of Directors also approved extending both the school day and year significantly beyond traditional averages in the state, but the rationale for this without data that "the previous length of the school day created an obstacle to learning" was questioned by the state in its review of the plan.

With regard to making student performance data available to students, educators and parents in ways that inform and improve instruction and services, the EAA is relying on its Buzz digital platform to be the primary source of daily, standards-based information on student progress and teacher growth. The EAA claims that administrators will be able to use the data from Buzz to supervise teaching and learning. Teachers will be able to use standards-based resources, activities and assessments downloaded from the platform. Parents will be able to monitor their child's academic progress without waiting for more traditional 6- to 9- week benchmark reports. And, students will be able to access self-assessment data and learning tools, including E-book libraries, to move them toward mastery of content and skills.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA asserts that it has developed a financial operations data website that contains state and local funding information on school-level expenditures. Actual personnel salaries at the school-level for all instructional and support staff is available through the site and non-personnel expenditures as required by this grant. A strength of this LEA's system for increasing transparency in LEA investments is that the website data is updated monthly so that stakeholders are kept current on expenditures and do not have to wait for the budget reports traditionally presented annually by most school districts in the nation. The financial information is also archived for up to five years. In another dimension of transparency, the district's Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOP) is said to be available on the EAA website. As evidence, samples of relevant policies were provided in the appendix of this grant application. Again, no evidence was presented regarding how stakeholders without computer access can get to this data, but perhaps hard copies of the financial reports and the SOP will be made available upon request.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The EAA is a school district that was formally created in August 2011 by the Regents of Eastern Michigan University and the Detroit Public Schools "to address the Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) schools throughout the state." [emphasis added]. Establishment of the district is supported by laws of the Michigan legislature and by the Governor and provides the LEA with the "autonomy to create a personalized system of learning for all children in its member schools." The district's SOP gives the chief administrator of the district (called Chancellor) authority "to create a system of public schooling to transform EAA member schools." School Reinvention Teams with their principals, teachers, and support staff also have flexibility and autonomy to "effectuate human and financial resources, the curriculum and technology tools, grouping strategies, and other innovations . . . to provide a personalized, student-centered system of teaching and learning. Therefore, as discussed in this application, there is legislative- and executive-level support by the state for the district to exercise given authority to achieve the goals of the RTTT-D grant.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Engagement of stakeholders for this application began with twelve statewide strategic planning meetings in which reportedly over 750 stakeholders --- parents, teachers, principals, community members, partners in the current model, and students --- participated in discussions of the values and educational and other needs of the communities served by the participating schools. In small focus groups, participants in these meetings participated in a simulation in which they were asked "to document their most valued elements for 21st century public schooling." The materials used in the simulation and Scorecard Summary Data Sheets for the elementary schools and for the secondary schools are provided in the appendix of this grant application. The results were used by the drafters of the proposal to inform development of the five pillars undergirding this proposal (discussed in this review in A1) and the meeting process provided participants an opportunity to buy-in to the reform model. When the proposal had been drafted the Chancellor met with representatives of the stakeholder groups to share a summary of the draft as indicated in the wording of the form letters of support of the teachers. Thus, there was meaningful involvement of these stakeholders in development of the plan.</p> <p>The LEA is not a collective-bargaining district. The applicant indicated that letters of support for the application were received from all but two teachers in the participating schools; sample signed teacher form letters were included in the appendix, so that it appears that the district met the RTTT-D eligibility requirement for 70% of teachers support the application. The applicant holds that "100% of the EAA's district schools are participating in the RTT- D grant activities." But, it is not clear whether they are compelled by the very legislation and authority that created the school district to participate, if only by connotation, since the districts are among the lowest-achieving schools in the state. The EAA says that 95% of the students projected to enroll in this new type school did indeed come to the school, in a state that has universal choice, but provides no evidence to support this assertion.</p> <p>There were also letters of support from a wide range of community organizations, colleges, business entities, and local and state government officials.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

As with Section A3, this sub-criterion relates to whether the LEA provided evidence of goals, timelines, activities, and deliverables for analyzing the status of personalized learning in the participating schools and in the district. Integral to such a high quality plan is an analysis of the needs and gaps that the plan will address. This application states that such an analysis was conducted through SWOT analyses (results are in the appendix), focus groups, surveys, and digital parking lots, the results influenced the development of the five strategic goals of the district's plan. The district then developed a high quality plan based on the five needs/goals, with identified activities, timelines, deliverables and persons responsible for full implementation. Student achievement gaps in reading and mathematics and in graduation and college enrollment that are the basis for these needs/goals were thoroughly presented by the applicant in the tables cited in A3 of this review. Certainly the resulting plan addresses the gaps by aiming to get students college- and career-ready in a district where "zero percent of eighth grade students are college and career ready based on the proficiency measures . . . " and the same low percent of 8th grade students are enrolled at present in algebra, but there was no indication that the analysis specifically addressed the levels of existing personalized learning, if any, in the participating schools of the LEA.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has developed a comprehensive and coherent plan of activities, deliverables, and timelines grounded in a theory of change for students to master the Core Content State Standards and be prepared for college and 21st century career challenges. The applicant has planned five primary projects (Connecting Capacity, Connecting Tools, Connecting Information, Connecting Data, and Connecting the School, Home and Community) for establishing a rich personalized learning environment for all students. How each will support challenging and engaging personalized learning was detailed in Table C.1: *Strategic Plan and Strategies Aligned with RTT-D Projects*. Continuous feedback to students, curriculum maps for the common core and blended learning are among the approaches identified in the Table. The applicant's definition of blended learning speaks to learning in and out of school and, in part, through online delivery with some student control over the time, pace and path of individual student education (citation by the applicant is Horn & Staker, 2011). The blended learning environment of this application has multiple types of technology (from notebooks to phones to e-books; video and audio) for student- and teacher-use, is multidisciplinary and engages students in rigorous and relevant real-world applications and collaborative problem-solving.

Each student will have an Individualized Learning Plan. But, distinction in instructional and learning approaches for elementary/middle school-age students and high school students were not evident. For example, elementary students may need more learning supports for the use of self-assessments and use of technology tools and other media or planning their own learning goals.

The applicant states that a daily self-assessment through the district's digital Buzz platform has been designed to track students' perceptions of their own developing expertise, engagement and effort. Students also have access, through the same platform, to an incredible number of open source resources to structure their own learning/learning path. *Student Quick Reference* screens from the Buzz platform provide evidence of this possibility. The applicant was careful to fully describe the five "domains" for knowledge acquisition and critical thinking that students will use and will be helped to internalize for deep and life-long learning: (1) learn, (2) practice, (3) apply, (4) assess, and (5) reflect so that students can track and manage their own learning.

In its concern to prepare students to be successful in the 21st global world and be exposed to diverse cultures, EAA students will be taught world languages and EAA will be a member of the International Studies Schools Network. Students in the Network are learning other languages and EAA students will be able to communicate and use new language skills with other Network students. Using iEARN and with their teachers' facilitation, EAA students will be able to work with their peers from around the world in project-based learning activities of global importance.

The applicant also states that it will partner with Envision Schools so that students can create a College Readiness Portfolio.

The Portfolio will provide evidence that students have met core competencies, can use 21 century leadership skills (critical thinking, powerful communications and collaborate productively), have had a minimum of one Workplace Learning in which they can demonstrate their ability to do research and inquiry and use analytical skills. No evidence from these last three program partner programs was presented to substantiate these curriculum claims.

Obviously with students having the opportunity to learn through these varied and numerous avenues, personalized learning and teaching is the critical attribute of the EAA system. It is alleged by the applicant that the greatest beneficiaries of this approach to educating high-needs students are special education and English language learners. They state that "the varying cognitive skills, developmental levels, or language barriers which may seem insurmountable in a traditional classroom . . . can be overcome with these advanced instructional strategies." And, as if all of these methodologies were not enough, EAA indicates that up to six additional models for bringing high-needs students to their fullest potential will be used in this LEA's design; for example, On-line Driver Platform and Remote Teacher.

Unfortunately, just one example of the validity of this statement and successful use of the so-called advanced instructional strategies was presented; namely, the use of a special education "Reverse Inclusion Model" being used at one of the elementary schools of the LEA for the first time this 2012 – 2013 school year so that it is too early to see if the claims of positive impact will be justified.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In the second paragraph of this component, the applicant shares a profound statistic; specifically, that "currently zero teachers are rated as effective" in this district. Thus, the EAAs work is framed in a context of great challenge to craft a high quality plan of activities, deliverables, and timelines for increasing the number of students with effective and highly effective teachers during the grant period and before it has ended, if students are to be taught in personalized, rigorous learning environments. Again, as throughout this application, EAA proposes a well-detailed, job-embedded plan to help teachers have a cultural and professional shift in how they understand and practice teaching in a student-centered system.

The applicant states that all teachers undergo a rigorous hiring process and then are required to attend a four-week summer training to prepare them to work in a blended environment. Topics appropriate for creating student-centered classrooms are stressed such as organizational strategies or technology use in personalized learning environments. There are training video vignettes, phone training and support, the use of teaching and learning coaches, and the support and training of Professional Learning Communities to name only a few of the planned methodologies for delivery of professional development. Indeed, *Project 1: Connecting Capacity* is the district's mechanism for providing nested professional development content, coaches, and an electronic portfolio so that teachers can in fact move aggressively to scale. But, there was limited evidence that the professional development addressed strategies for accelerating or even deepening individual student learning, especially for high-needs students. There are mechanisms for ongoing monitoring of teachers' training and feedback to teachers on lesson planning and interventions in the Buzz digital platform. Through Buzz, teachers have real-time data to inform instruction and accelerate learning at their fingertips as evidenced by sample Buzz screens in the appendix.

As per the eligibility requirements for RTTT-D districts to commit to implementing teacher and principal evaluations systems to improve collective and individual teaching and instructional leader practices by 2012 - 2015, this LEA is planning a multi-pronged evaluation model that differentiates performance based on real-time, value-added data on student growth. Teachers are also expected, with the support of their principals and coaches, to use the tools of the Buzz *Community and Personal Progress* segment of the platform's Teacher Effectiveness System to craft individualized professional development, feedback and recommendations for improved teaching success. Similarly, principals' supervisors and superintendents are to use the same approach in evaluating school building leaders. An overview of how the Effectiveness System works is included in the EAA plan. The Michigan state department of education's comments on the application noted that "The teacher evaluation system is only described in general detail, but was not well-supported with examples of school data that contribute to the teacher's score, nor are there enough details about how teacher practice will improve after being provided with information coming out of the evaluation system." There was no evidence in the applicant's *Response to Michigan Department of Education Feedback to Race to the Top - District Application* that EAA addressed this issue through changes in its application

or design of its Teacher Effectiveness System.

A sophisticated feature of the Buzz platform allows teachers to view the progress and complete activities of his/her students toward meeting college- and career-readiness standards and graduation requirements. A *Student Productivity Matrix* (Table C.2) that this feature is built upon is included in the plan.

Also notable are plans for a “talent pipeline” so that a pool of principals can be groomed to be highly effective. The fact that the applicant’s proposed principal apprenticeship program will be six-months is evidence of the commitment of the EAA to have their participating schools lead by leaders who are grounded in student-centered, personalized learning. The teacher leader academy is complementary to this effort as well.

This applicant has also already been funded the USDOE Teacher Incentive Fund grant to develop its Pay for Performance evaluation system. This reform component holds promise for linking teacher competence and practice with student academic growth.

In closing, the many strategies that will be used by this LEA to affect both the Learning and Teaching aspects of the Preparing Students for College and Careers requirement of the RTTT-D grant, are wide in scope, if generally unproven as yet. Attentive implementation, including thoughtful integration of all the innovations, and evaluation of such a broad collection of approaches will, therefore, be most critical to success of this applicant’s plans. Much of the applicant’s potential success will depend on the efficacy of the Buzz platform and the skill of those who use its tools and interpret the resulting data.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The EAA is a school district that was formally created in August 2011 by the Regents of Eastern Michigan University and the Detroit Public Schools “to address the Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) schools throughout the state” so that the LEA is in and of itself a case in point of re-organizing the business of public education at the state-level to support personalized learning goals with prescribed activities, deliverables and persons responsible for implementation of this new entity. In fact, the policies defining the entity are in the district’s SOP in the appendix. Establishment of the district is supported by laws of the Michigan legislature and by the current Governor.

School Reinvention Teams have flexibility and autonomy to “effectuate human and financial resources, the curriculum and technology tools, grouping strategies, and other innovations . . . to provide a personalized, student-centered system of teaching and learning.” This structure seems to support the district’s assertion that it has a “streamlined central administration” that has moved from a top down decision-making organization to one of school-level decision-making. But, statements that this reform effort will be lead by the Chancellor and his senior team and citations of their experience in implementing personalized education model implied a more direct hands-on approach by top levels of the EAA administration in this reform. Yet, dotted lines in the organizational chart in the LEA’s plan portray a looser-coupling of central office to the EAA schools.

The applicant states that 90% of all school resource funding is allocated to the schools. Michigan state law does not require principals to accept the transfer of teachers based on seniority or require principals to retain employees based on tenure. Samples of other relevant policies are provided in the appendix of this grant application are additional evidence of the LEA infrastructure.

The applicant infers that some LEA schools have achieved “Managed Performance Empowerment,” giving them autonomy to change curriculum and resources as long as any such change ensures that students achieve mastery of academic standards. The number of schools achieving this status, how the schools rose to this level, the criteria for having greater empowerment, and the results of greater empowerment on student, teacher, and school outcomes was not shared, so the significance of this policy to project goals is unknown.

As previously noted, the EAA has received a seat-time waiver which facilitates varied kinds of ways for students to earn credit based on mastery and not the amount of time spent on a topic. Thus, there is no credit recovery as for traditional high schools since students must demonstrate “Advanced” or “Proficient” mastery of the standards for each course and receive a grade of Incomplete until they do. The district will use a standards-based grading system. Students can demonstrate mastery and earn credit through blended and virtual courses at the secondary-level, but somewhat ordinary traditional approaches to special needs were described by the LEA such as IEP modifications, and the use of dual language materials.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10
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(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Here the concern is on whether there is a high quality plan of activities, timelines and deliverables for an infrastructure that supports students and parents as well as educators with accessible learning resources, technology systems and user-friendly data bases. The applicant provides several examples of appropriate infrastructure support to these ends. Buzz has a library of print, video, audio, interactive content and games as resources for student- and teacher-use in a personalized learning environment. All students have a required set of activities/common tasks to show mastery of content and demonstrate application of learnings, but each student also has individual tasks based on their interests and skill levels to do the same. Home literacy resources include *Quest* packs of digital fiction and informational materials, and students and their families can have internet access for a low-cost brokered by the district. Other resources include online and site-based technical support as well as peer tutors. The fact that the technical help desk is open daily until 8 pm. allows for greater use by all stakeholders and resolution of problems. Information on instructional and school/district operations (budget, human resources, financial) is available through the district's open, integrated Buzz platform. Samples of Buzz training materials for teacher and students are contained in the appendices. There were no timelines indicated or persons responsible for supporting this infrastructure of options.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

In keeping with the requirement that the LEA have a high quality plan for timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals, the EAA displayed its design for *Ongoing Assessment and Continuous Improvement* in a master table of studies to be conducted and supportive Tables E.1, E.2 and E.4 of its proposal. The tables list process and outcome evaluations that will measure the effectiveness of project implementation and student and teacher outcomes such as student reading and math performance and classroom observations for teacher performance. Timelines for conducting the evaluations by month and year, deliverables and persons responsible for completing the evaluations are also listed. A *Procedures Plan*, Table E.1 poses the questions for information collection complementary to conducting the evaluations and an *Operationalization of Variables*, Table E.2 lists the indicators for variables such as fidelity of implementation and criteria for the degree of operationalization (strong/present, some, none/absent). The specific measuring tools are listed in the appendix. Of course, as could be expected from this review to this point, the district again cites its Buzz digital platform which will provide continuous real-time data on students and teachers and their progress toward project goals for continuous analysis and sharing of information on the quality of investments in professional development or other activities, for any needed modifications and adjustments to the project models.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
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(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA plans to use every available resource for ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders, including but not limited to, the district website, School Reinvention Teams and the district's Administrative Leadership Team to provide information on progress of the reform initiative. In fact, the Administrative Leadership Team has responsibility to oversee and

help implement the communication process holistically, with the Project Director being responsible for day-to-day communications. A strength is that the Chancellor of the school district and his team will continue to hold the kind of focused town halls held during the strategic planning phase of this project. It is to be expected that this district with its heavy reliance on technology to support other components of their plan would turn to social media for reporting on outcomes and events and the posting of required federal reports as part of program implementation. Measures of student engagement are also part of the evaluative plan for this project.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Ten types of performance metrics are planned by the EAA for this RTTT-D project from student measures of academic growth and value-added to status measures of achievement against college- and career-readiness standards to climate/culture measures to talent measures of the percentage of teachers evaluated as being effective or highly effective based on student growth. Unfortunately samples of the instruments that will be used were not provided so that although the rationale for using them was included in the plan, it was difficult to determine whether they are going to be age- and grade-appropriate and whether they will be sufficient to gauge progress over time. Certainly some of the measures and the kinds of data they provide and for which ages and grades are familiar ones like state achievement assessments. Others such as the processes and tools of the proposed Teacher Management System are not as well known as to the efficacy of them for the purposes indicated. The proposed instruments also vary as to complexity from the somewhat simplistic Survey Monkey professional development exit survey (found in the appendix) that will provide Likert scale-like feedback of teacher responses to training to the sophistication of teacher feedback mechanisms through the Buzz digital platform making it difficult to compare them as to rigor and sufficiency.

But, the applicant did provide clear, achievable student achievement targets, overall and by subgroup, for reading and math as well as graduation rate and college enrollment targets. The plan for measuring student growth as one or more year's growth per one year of instruction is ambitious and attainable.

The applicant indicated that the reading measurement would be the primary focus of the K – 3 measures since "Research has shown that students who are not reading on grade level at the end of 1st grade are predicted to not be reading on grade level by 3rd grade and ultimately 9th grade." The LEA wants to ensure that students are on-track for college- and career- readiness so that early interventions can be made where necessary if student achievement scores do not reflect a strong foundation in language arts literacy skills. This unnamed benchmark test of reading proficiency will be given four times per year for timely formative feedback. An ACT measurement of indicators of high school completion is a yet another test that will be given students, this time those in grades 4 – 8.

In summary, the performance measures for the EAA proposal are varied in purpose, format, rigor, and frequency of when the assessments will be given. Tables with baseline scores and performance targets for students by subject area and grade and by subgroup, during the grant period and beyond, were provided in the plan. How the district will review and improve measures over time that prove insufficient to gauge implementation progress was not addressed.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

4

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The EAA states that it will evaluate the effectiveness of investments using Coburn's five dimensions of Scale. The five dimensions are depth (deep change in classroom or school practice); sustainability; *spread* or th diffusion of the reform to more classrooms and schools; *shift* (in school operations and the thinking and behaviors of educators); and *evolution*. The LEA points to several deliverables that are listed in a table of *Formative Data to Ensure Continuous Improvement* as examples of evaluative tools that will be used to analyze components of the project. For example, one deliverable is "classroom observations, focus groups, surveys, and needs assessments will be used to document the extent to which there is a deep change in teacher practice." It is interesting, given the elaborate Teacher Evaluation System and Pay for Performance scheme of this project that products of these two program components are not listed in the table. Other deliverables include annual climate and culture reports and assessment and dashboard reports. Plans to have these be yearly reports does not appear to capport with the district's pledge for more timely feedback although these reports may document effectiveness of investments. An annual assessment analysis that will compare student proficiency levels year to year also may not provide the most timely feedback even if it documents effectiveness of the project.

The district has received approval to extend the school year and day of participating schools. In its comments the state department pointed out that while the plan to increase possible instructional time may be worthy, the applicant provided no evidence that the "previous length of the school day created an obstacle to learning." Similarly, the state also stated that "there seemed to be an incomplete rationale as to why this was a proposed reform." The LEA did not provide the requested district evidence, but did refer to the extensive research on the value of extending the school year and indicated that extended learning time was a key turnaround strategy of the USDOE.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant's budget, including the budget narrative and tables, should identify RTTT-D funds as well as district monies, grants, state and other Federal funds that will be used so that determinations can be made as to the reasonableness and sufficiency of requested monies and the rationale for same. In the narrative, the budget itself and document support in the appendix of this LEA's application, grant, state federal and local funds, separate from RTTT-D monies were cited that will be used to fund this proposal. In fact, nearly \$9 million dollars from other sources was listed in the overall budget. The State Review Receipt in the appendix alleges that non-RTTT-d resources really amount to "110 million in leveraged resources [that] have been coordinated to support aspects of the implementation and to ensure sustainability of resources after the grant period." Sources for the \$9 million included an award from Next Generation Learning of the Gates Foundation and a \$500,000 matching grant from The Skillman Foundation. Title I and Title II federal monies are also being used to support this proposal and state school aid is part of the financial support of the Governor and state legislature for establishment of the EAA. An example of local LEA funding is for Coaches and Content Curators of Project 1 (the professional development component of the larger proposal).</p> <p>Aside from these monies, the applicant is requesting nearly \$29 million in RTTT-D funds for this proposal. A summary Budget Table of overall costs for personnel, travel, equipment, supplies, contracts, and training stipends is followed by Budget Tables for the same costs for each of the five (5) individual projects of this proposal (Connecting Capacity, Connecting Tools, Connecting Information, Connecting Data, Connecting the Home, Family and Community). There is a <i>Project-Level Budget Narrative</i> for each project in support of the matrix of projected expenditures.</p> <p>Where there are reductions in projected costs from year to year, assumptions of reduced need may not hold true. For example, Project Manager for Project 2 which focuses on establishment and maintenance of the Buzz platform anticipates that this position will only be needed for the first two years of the project and that existing IT staff will be able to take over operations in the following years of the grant period. However, given increased use of the platform as additional schools join the LEA, the centrality of the platform to many aspects of the reform effort (from professional development to student data) and probable needed adjustments to the platform for better efficiency and effectiveness, this projection seems unrealistic. Similarly, the Data Specialist of Project 4 is budgeted for only three years of the four of the RTTT-D grant. It may also be that the inclusion of an Administrative Assistant in just one of the projects is also not credible given the demands in terms of paperwork and other secretarial support for any such projects as called for in the RTTT-D. Whether these reductions will prove to be valid is relevant to sustainability of program components. Still, the LEA has developed a detailed plan for continuing the project that is presented in a table entitled <i>High Quality Plan for Sustainability of the Projects Costs after the Term of the Grant</i> that lays out activities for securing new funds when the RTTT-D grant is ended.</p> <p>One-time or not full 4-year investments were clearly identified in the budget tables and explained in the narratives. A rationale was given for all budget categories; costs appeared to be reasonable with personnel salaries and stipends being based on district scales, and other costs being clearly itemized.</p>		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: <p>Some reductions in projected costs already highlighted were also a foundation for sustainability of program components. The LEA has developed a detailed plan for continuing the project that is entitled a <i>High-Quality Plan for Sustainability of the Project's Goals after the Term of the Grant</i>. In meeting the requirements for a high-quality plan, the applicant outlined activities, timelines, deliverables and persons responsible for the effort to secure additional public and private funds to replace RTTT-D monies when the grant has ended. For example, one activity calls for "track[ing] and access[ing] state grants and federal grants that are available." This activity will begin in January 2013 and continue monthly with the Chief Officer for Equity, Innovation, and Accountability having responsibility for completing grant applications. While the table provided clear steps for activities to secure future monies, the response to this section of the proposal was not elaborated upon as much as other responses to proposal components..</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: <p>This district is opting for the Competitive Preference Priority that calls for districts to integrate public and private resources in partnerships designed to augment school system resources by providing additional social, emotional, and behavioral supports to RTTT-D grant participating students and their families, who will also be served through the primary grant.</p> <p>EAA will address this priority through collaboration with an existing community partner; specifically the Detroit Parent Network (DPN) to establish Parent Empowerment Centers in EAA schools and provide programs that will help families learn how to engage in their child's education. In a reasonably, but not overly compelling presentation for this Competitive Preference Priority, the EAA provides statistics of DPN's recent 3-year track record of success such as 186% increases over time of parents attending that organization's workshops that "integrate human service needs (often barriers to parental involvement) with academic support." This kind of integrated support for parental involvement is congruent with the goals of the EAA Project 5 – Connecting the School, Home and Community. Drawing upon DPN's past success, the EAA has projected targets of 75% parent participation in ten (10) kinds of DPN program services in the very first year of this collaboration. These projections appear to be overly optimistic considering other DPN statistics of only an 8% increase in parents attending Title I meetings in the 2011 – 2012 school year or a 6.5% increase in parent visits to DPN Resource Centers. These and seven other indicators will be tracked using a data dashboard to measure program impact on parent engagement.</p> <p>Another aspect of the DPN program will feature education activities for students including a <i>Project Graduation and Algebra</i> Camp for grade 7 – 12 students. Other education innovations include family literacy programs and <i>Kids Grow Up Great</i> to expose pre-Kindergarten children and parents to music, arts and sciences. It is anticipated that the DPN program can be brought to scale since DPN has previous and wide-spread experience serving southern Michigan communities, but no evidence was provided that the proposed or similar programs have had significant impact in the past or will in the future, even though DPN is in four (4) EAA schools of its 15 PLA schools, and no significant change in student achievement variables has been reported yet. As required by RTTT-D application guidelines for the Competitive Preference Priority, a table of <i>Population-Level Desired Results</i> lists outcome goals by population group and type of result.</p> <p>Lastly however, the district does not present a strong discussion of how these services will directly impact student achievement/learning. There is an assumption that supporting parents to get their GED or gain financial literacy will translate into improved student outcomes. Similarly, how DPN's efforts will build school staff capacity to address students' emotional-social needs is also not addressed. Yet, it must be said that the applicant's proposal in a rather comprehensive way per the guidelines meets the criteria of integrating of public and private resources to augment district resources for providing additional student and family supports to schools,</p>		

Absolute Priority 1

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	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
<p>Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The Education Achievement Authority (EAA) of Michigan establishes a vision of significant, deep and creative reform that uses many innovative approaches --- a custom-developed digital platform for program evaluation and technology support of several program components; a curriculum and instructional framework for personalized and blended learning for every student to be able to meet academic standards and be college- and career-ready; on-demand professional development and new performance-based teacher and principal evaluations --- to meet Absolute Priority 1. The vision of student-centered education and the five pillars that support a reform model for turning around PLAs meets the acceleration goals of Absolute Priority 1 as well. The five projects of this application (Connecting Capacity, Connecting Tools, Connecting Information, Connecting Data, and Connecting the School, Home and Community) also meet identified needs of the schools of the LEA, correlated with the four core educational assurance areas as discussed at the beginning of this review. While significant decreases in achievement gaps were not substantiated as described in the proposal, the goal of value-added student growth is also in keeping with this required Priority.</p> <p>This application was well-organized, effectively using the template for RTTT-D proposals and had clear cross-references from one component of the proposed plan to other components as well as the appendices so that understanding whether the innovations of this proposal were vigorous and creative enough for Absolute Priority was easy to determine.</p>		

Total	210	184
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	8
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant is submitting two Optional Budget Supplements; this one for \$499,833 to integrate multiple sources and kinds of evidence of mastery learning and skill in performance-based report cards. The request is within the dollar limit for such Optional Supplements. An additional requirement of Optional Budget proposals is that they not be necessary for implementation of the original RTTT-D proposal, yet the performance-based report card of this first Optional Budget submission seems to be a quite close iteration of the standards-based grading system of the LEA's main RTTT. Although the proximity of the standards-based grading system of the original proposal may not be close enough to eliminate consideration of this budget, more clarity regarding the differences and interdependencies would have been appropriate. In the case of these new generation report cards proposed in the Supplement, academic assessments, performance tasks, interest and learning style inventories, and identified student strengths would be linked and also integrated with the <i>My Data</i> project of the main proposal. A new twist is proposed development of mobile apps for students and parents access to the new progress reports. Activities and timelines are displayed in a highly-qualified table plan of <i>Technology Tools to Promote and Report Student Performance</i>. This component is directly connected to the objectives of Project 1 – Connecting Capacity of the original proposal. A budget of projected costs and the rationale for them is included. The costs are mainly contractual for research vendors to conduct surveys of progress and grade reports, and platform developers to design the digital progress reports and apps. The need for monies to travel to four cities to investigate the reporting systems of their communities seems not quite essential given electronic conferencing monies that could be used to gather the same information.</p> <p>A significant omission to the budget narrative is an explanation/a rationale for this project for these schools and students. Nor does the narrative tell how the applicant would carry out activities co-developed and implemented across two or more LEAs; no additional LEAs are cited as being involved in this initiative.</p>		
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	11
<p>Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant is submitting another Optional Budget Supplement; this one for \$1,159,062 to build a new business model for</p>		

e-book libraries. This request is within the dollar limit for Optional Supplements. An additional requirement of Optional Budget proposals is that they not be necessary for implementation of the original RTTT-D proposal. The second Optional Budget Supplement is to define a less-costly model for school district purchase of e-books into the EAA teaching and learning platform; these libraries seemed to be integral to the design for personalized student choice and learning of the original proposal that takes changing student interests into consideration. A budget for projected costs and the rationale for them is included. The costs are all contractual and include a one-time cost for integration of digital libraries and so calls into question the necessity of the libraries for full implementation of this aspect of the original RTTT-D proposal. Discussion of how the co-partners will develop activities to be implemented across new schools that join EAA will need to be more fully fleshed out. Again, as for many planned items in this district's RTTT-D proposal, the innovative, beyond state-of-the-art thinking behind the various designs, is like this one a strength of the many parts of this application.